

Sample Special Topics Submission to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

A topic may be offered no more than two times.

APPENDIX: SPECIAL TOPICS

Department of English

English 59 Special Topics in Literature: Literature Of Desire: The Problem Of Love

3 hours; 3 credits

Bulletin Description: Themes in the literature of different periods or in the work of several authors. Topics vary from term to term; Topic is selected by the instructor. Course description may be obtained in the department office before registration. Students may take this course for credit twice, but may not repeat topics.

Prerequisite: one of the following: English 1 or 1.2 or 1.7.

**Title of Topic Being Proposed: LITERATURE OF DESIRE: THE PROBLEM OF LOVE
Offered for the 1st time (2nd time): Spring 2005**

Special Topic Description:

Love and desire are famously “problematic,” both conceptually and as lived human experience. Perceived as both boundless and limited (and anywhere in between - see quotations above), love and desire have ever been the focus of much great literature. Indeed, desire, broadly conceived is not only a literary “theme,” but arguably the core of human creativity, in general, whose manifestations include the widest range of concerns. For our purposes, we might start with Falstaff’s all-embracing love of life and move through less Shakespearean varieties, then to beauty, curiosity, art, knowledge, nature, sex, faith, even death (“Death is the mother of beauty...”).

The course will explore a number of classic literary works which in different ways address desire. Through analyzing them, we will try to reveal, in D.H. Lawrence’s words, why the novel (i.e., literature) matters so much to us. While literary study is the foreground, in view of the subject’s centrality to our historical and contemporary experience, the course will of necessity consider these texts against a broad social, cultural, historical, and political background, explicitly in the case of the Freud essay, implicitly otherwise.

Projected enrollment: 25 students per year

Clearances: Specify ‘None’

Date of departmental approval:

Course Objectives:

- understand and analyze literary and visual texts
- understand literature in interdisciplinary contexts (e.g., cultural, social, historical, and political)
-  use a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts
-  identify literary styles in the context of historical periods
-  use the library to find appropriate print and electronic sources for a research paper
- develop respect for both intellectual and cultural diversity

Assignments: Two papers of five pages each and a final exam. Faithful attendance in class and active and productive participation are required.

Required Texts:

- Shakespeare, Henry the Fourth: Penguin Edition
- Shakespeare, Measure for Measure: Penguin Edition
- William Blake, Selected Poems of William Blake: Penguin Edition
- Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights: Bedford/St. Martins Press
- Vladimir Nabokov, Lolita: Vintage Books
- Joyce Carol Oates, Broke Heart Blues: Plume Books
- Joyce Carol Oates, Rape: A Love Story: Carroll and Graf
- Philip Roth, The Human Stain: Vintage Books
- Philip Roth, The Dying Animal: Vintage Books
- Other works by Freud, D. H. Lawrence, and Wallace Stevens to be distributed.

Course Outline:

Weeks 1 and 2: Introduction

Romeo and Juliet, “Crazy Jane”, The Moviegoer, and Negative Capability.
Sigmund Freud, “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness”

Weeks 3 and 4: The Falstaffian Imperative: Pure Love of Life

Shakespeare, Henry the Fourth

Weeks 5 and 6: Barnadine Will Not Die!

Shakespeare, Measure for Measure

Weeks 7 – 10: Innocence and Experience

William Blake, Songs of Innocence and of Experience
Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights
D. H. Lawrence, Selected short stories, poems, and essays
Vladimir Nabokov, Lolita

Weeks 11- 14: The Crack-Up

Joyce Carol Oates, Broke Heart Blues
Joyce Carol Oates, Rape: A Love Story (a novella)
Philip Roth, The Human Stain
Philip Roth, The Dying Animal (a novella)